

The challenges of current and retrospective digital archiving of doctoral dissertations: towards integration of several university collections at the University Library “Svetozar Marković” in Belgrade

Abstract. University Library “Svetozar Marković” possess’ several collections of doctoral dissertations defended at the University of Belgrade and other universities in Serbia or abroad. In particular that includes: current doctoral dissertations, deposited in the Digital repository from 2012, collection of doctoral dissertations digitized retrospectively on users' demand, and, finally, and the collection of old Serbian dissertations divided into two sub-collections: defended by Serbian scientists on the foreign universities and defended at the University of Belgrade at the beginning of the 20th century. The challenges may differ, but the copyright issues are identified as crucial for each one of them.

1 Introduction

The University library “Svetozar Marković”, Central Library of the University of Belgrade, possess the largest and very valuable collection of Ph.D. theses in Serbia. In this paper several collections of doctoral dissertations defended at the University of Belgrade and other universities in Serbia or abroad, and digitally archived at the University Library “Svetozar Marković”, will be presented. The completion of these collections and their integration in the superior one, pose in front of the Library significant challenge. In this paper the main course of such challenges will be drown, together with the draft of what could be the solution. This short review and the hidden problems could be accepted as a model for other libraries with the similar goals.

2 Collections

Collections of doctoral dissertations at the University library include: 1) *current doctoral dissertations*, which are deposited in the Digital repository systematically from 2012; 2) collection of *doctoral dissertations digitized retrospectively on users' demand*, and, finally, 3) the collection of *old Serbian dissertations* divided into two sub-collections: those defended by Serbian scientists on the foreign universities and those defended at the University of Belgrade at the beginning of the 20th century. The aim of the Library is to complete and integrate collections of old and current theses, which will enable increasing the visibility of scientific heritage, self-awareness of university achieves, and the protection of these materials through its openness

2.1 Current dissertatons

The integration of collections is facing challenges which are mainly connected to copyright. From 2012 by the decisions of the University of Belgrade, all dissertations defended at this University have to be archived digitally into the Digital repository PHAIDRA and its subsystem Etheses (eteze.bg.ac.rs). At the same time, dissertations have to follow particular University instructions on the form of dissertations and the necessary supplement materials that every thesis should possess. The aim of these instructions, beside the unification of such material, was to assure that every dissertation will provide the necessary metadata for the Digital repository. At the same time, these instructions have implemented the Creative Commons standards within the Ph.D. studies, since every thesis, has to have three statements as its integral part. Among them the most specific is a *Statement on use* which contains CC standard and requires the choice of one of 6 CC licenses.

Till today, almost 6500 theses are archived, following strictly the process of Ph.D. studies, and the production of this kind of students' papers at the University. The majority of the theses was available in open access even before 2014 when OA became mandatory for all universities in Serbia. The mandatory elements within the thesis, created by the candidate (abstract, key words, etc.) become metadata of the repository.

Although the current archiving is regulated by University documents and defined through a clear procedure, it can be identified several problems during this process: rarely, it is the lack of some elements of the Ph.D. thesis or, more often, undefined status of copyright status (missing Creative Commons Licenses). For the purpose of archiving, all necessary elements must be provided otherwise it requires additional effort within the Library, like: contacting the faculties, and candidate of the thesis so that he/she can declare what their choice of CC license will be.

2.2 Digitization on demand

Soon after establishing this procedure and building the necessary infrastructure of the repository, arose the interest in depositing the dissertations defended before 2012. That is why the University library established the new service of digitization of the thesis on users' request. Users interested in putting their Ph.D. thesis in open access should fill the request, provide the agreements, and choose one of the Creative Commons licenses. Their thesis is going to be digitized and added to collection of current dissertations. The number of dissertations made available online is not very high, around 200, but this service is constantly available for the users. By filling their request users can provide the additional data of the dissertation and create the repository content. Although consistent and with no copyright issues, this service cannot provide massive and complete digitalization of the older collection. The other challenge in this matter is how to motivate authors to send the request for digitization and putting their thesis in open access.

2.3 Old dissertations

A similar copyright problem is identified during the realization of the project "Digitization of doctoral dissertations defended before 1941: dissertations of Serbian scientists defended on foreign universities and dissertations from Belgrade University (1905–1941)" supported by the Ministry of culture and information of the Republic of Serbia in 2014. During this project, a special collection of dissertations defended at the Belgrade University (around 150 dissertations) is created, together with the collection of the

50 dissertations from foreign, European universities where some distinguished Serbian scientists have defended their academic papers.

This project is very significant for reveal the part of national scientific and cultural heritage, since majority of these scientists, after getting their degrees on the major European universities, became very important figures in national academic life. It is also a contribution in national history and recognition of profound connections between national and European science.

Both of these collections are facing the copyright issues since for some of them copyright (possibility to digitize and make publicly available) didn't expire (70 years after author's death). On the other side, for some of the less known authors, for whom it is not possible to find easily the date of death, we cannot be sure if these rights are expired or not. In Serbia the issue of "orphan works" still is not regulated. Suggested changes of the Law on copyright, suggested during last few months, should finally bring this institute into national legislation

3 Solutions

These issues disable the intent to gather, digitize and make publicly available the integral collection of doctoral dissertations in Serbia. The solution has to include more than one aspect, and all these aspects can be divided into *internal* and *external* activities. Internal are connected to the steps inside of the library: the research and identification of missing data about authors of the thesis, and strong educational process directed to Ph.D. students in performing educations and training. From 2015 such trainings were organized at the Library for more than 500 students, mostly about form of doctoral dissertation, but also about the issue of CC standards, and why it is important to make the right choice of license.

However, efforts of the Library itself can overpass the problem just partially. In general, libraries are lacking the human resource for such a task, and they can resolve, by additional research and education, only current collection of dissertations. The successful investigation on copyright holders for many old dissertations remains impossible and the data on copyright holder in most cases are unavailable. That is the reason why external activities prevail in this matter of retrospective digitization of Ph.D. theses and that only legal support can bring sufficient and sustainable results (in particular, changes of Law concerning the "orphan works").

References

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